



J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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September 12, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **MONITORING OF COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS
FINAL REPORT**

In 2002, your Board instructed the Auditor-Controller to evaluate the implementation status of County-required conditions for a sample of development projects. Your request was based on Auditor-Controller findings and recommendations regarding La Viña in Altadena. In 2002, we reported that the developer had completed most of the planned construction, but had only completed about half of the land development conditions required by the County. We also reported that the County departments involved in development projects needed to improve their coordination and monitoring to ensure the project conditions were completed.

In response to your request, we have been periodically evaluating the status of a sample of 152 "Quality of Life" conditions, in categories such as landscaping, street improvements, water, fire protection, and drainage & sewage, for three other development projects (Attachment). Our review was intended to determine if these projects were experiencing the same delays in completing the County-required development conditions noted at La Viña. We issued four progress reports regarding the status of our review on October 9, 2003, and January 8, April 16, and July 13, 2004. This is our final report.

Results of Review

Overall, we found the condition implementation for the three projects was higher than La Viña. Specifically, we noted 82% of the 152 conditions for the three development

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projects have been completed, compared to 49% at La Viña. It should be noted that the three projects we reviewed were approved before our review of the La Viña project. As a result, some of the delays in implementing the County conditions on these projects are the result of the same issues noted in our La Viña report. Details of the projects we reviewed and a summary of the status of the conditions are in the Attachment to this report.

In 2002, in response to our report on La Viña, your Board created the County Land Development Task Force (LDTF). The LDTF, which includes the Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, County Counsel, Fire, Health Services, Regional Planning, and Chief Administrative Office, is working to improve the County land development process. The Task Force is working to standardize the types and terms of land development conditions, improve monitoring of conditions by County departments and improve accountability for enforcement. The Task Force has also streamlined the County's performance bond process to improve developer compliance.

In addition, the Department of Public Works is continuing to work with the other departments to implement the Electronic Development and Permit Tracking System (e-DAPTS). When implemented, e-DAPTS will provide centralized information on land development projects, including project conditions, condition implementation status, permit issuances, site inspections, etc.

The County Land Development Task Force and eDAPTS, when fully implemented, should improve developer compliance with County land development conditions. We plan to review the monitoring of land development conditions on a sample of projects that are approved after e-DAPTS is fully implemented.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Chief Administrative Office, the Departments of Fire, Health Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Regional Planning. They generally agreed with our assessment of the implementation status of the development conditions, and the need to continue to improve the land development process.

We thank department management and staff for their cooperation and assistance during our review. Please call if you have any questions, or your staff may call Jim Schneiderman at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:MMO:JLS:TK

Attachment

c: P. Michael Freeman, Fire Chief, Fire Department
Russ Guiney, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Bruce A. Chernof, M.D., Director and Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health Services
Bruce W. McClendon, Director of Planning, Department of Regional Planning
Donald L. Wolfe, Director, Department of Public Works
David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Raymond G. Fortner, County Counsel
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer
Audit Committee
Public Information Office

MONITORING OF COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Sample Projects

Arbor Glen, in Avocado Heights in the Puente Zoned District, has 33 single-family residences on 4.35 acres. The development is in a fully developed area, and is an affordable housing development, with at least 21 (64%) of the residences reserved for qualified lower and moderate-income, first-time buyers. The Regional Planning Commission approved the project in 2001. Currently, all homes are completed.

Malibu Terrace, in the unincorporated area near Calabasas, Agoura Hills, and Hidden Hills, includes 110 single-family residences and open space on 494 acres. The Board of Supervisors approved the project in 1995. As of March 2006, the development was approximately 90% complete.

Robertson's Ready Mix, in the unincorporated community of Rosewood, is a concrete batch plant and related support facilities. The project includes a railhead, offices, parking, landscaping, perimeter walls, and other facilities on 11.45 acres. The project required significant mitigation measures to minimize dust from the project. The Board of Supervisors approved the project in 2000. The plant is completely built and operational.

Implementation Status of Conditions (as of July 2006)

Project	COMPLETED		PARTIALLY COMPLETED		NOT COMPLETED		TOTAL
	Number of Conditions	Relative % of Total	Number of Conditions	Relative % of Total	Number of Conditions	Relative % of Total	Number of Conditions
Arbor Glen	45	100%	0	0%	0	0%	45
Malibu Terrace	40	77%	8	15%	4	8%	52
Robertson's Ready Mix	39	71%	14	25%	2	4%	55
TOTAL	124	82%	22	14%	6	4%	152

Remaining Conditions

- **Arbor Glen**

None.

- **Malibu Terrace**

Twelve (23%) of the 52 conditions we reviewed remain either partially complete or incomplete. The majority of these conditions relate to oak tree mitigation. The Fire Department continues to monitor oak trees to ensure that the oak tree mitigation is successfully completed. It should be noted that two of the conditions that are shown as partially complete or incomplete are time specific, requiring implementation at a specific time in the past (e.g., planting replacement oak trees or relocating oak trees within one year of removal of any oak trees, etc.). These conditions can no longer be implemented because the time when they were supposed to have been completed has passed.

- **Robertson's Ready Mix**

Sixteen (29%) of the 55 conditions reviewed remain either partially complete or incomplete. These conditions primarily relate to mitigation measures (e.g., noise monitoring, plant waste treatment and water). It should be noted that nine of the conditions that are shown as partially complete or incomplete are time specific, requiring implementation at a specific time in the past (e.g., monitoring noise during construction and within three months of the commencement of operations, etc.). These conditions can no longer be implemented because the time when they were supposed to have been completed has passed.